

Mecklenburg County Public Health

COVID-19 Testing – Childcare, Pre-K, K-12 Setting



SYMPTOMATIC Students/Staff:

COVID-19 testing is strongly recommended for symptomatic students or staff.

Students/staff who are excluded due to one or more of the symptoms on the Daily Symptoms Screening Checklist **MUST** meet one of the following criteria prior to returning to school:

- Documentation of a negative PCR test result w/symptom improvement and no fever for >24 hours (and no known exposure to someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days).
OR
- Documentation of an alternative diagnosis by medical provider w/symptom improvement and no fever for >24 hours (and no known exposure to someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days).
OR
- Stay home until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, symptoms are better, and no fever for >24 hours.

• Fever
• Chills
• Shortness of breath/
difficulty breathing
• New cough
• New loss of taste
or smell

Students/staff with other symptoms NOT included on the Daily Symptoms Screening Checklist **should also consider being tested for COVID**, depending on specific symptoms, history, and/or recommendation of medical provider.

Interpreting Results for SYMPTOMATIC Students/Staff:

PCR tests:

- **Positive** PCR test: student/staff member must stay home until criteria to end isolation are met.
- **Negative** test: student/staff member may return to school once symptoms have improved and no fever for 24 hours, unless:
 - Instructed to remain home by medical provider (e.g. due to clinical suspicion) OR
 - Needs to complete 14-day quarantine period due to exposure to COVID-19.

RT-PCR POC tests include:

- Cepheid Xpert Xpress
- Roche “cobas” SARS-CoV-2/Flu A/Flu B

RAPID ANTIGEN or ABBOT ID NOW tests:

- **Positive** rapid antigen or rapid Abbot ID NOW test:
 - Stay home until the criteria to discontinue isolation are met
- **Negative** rapid antigen or Abbot ID NOW test:
 - This result is considered a *presumptive negative test*. A follow-up laboratory-based PCR test needs to be performed prior to return to school.
 - The student/staff must stay in isolation until the follow up PCR test is complete, and results are known:
 - Negative PCR test: Return to school once symptoms have improved and no fever for 24 hours (and no known exposure to someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days).
 - Positive PCR test: Stay home until the criteria to discontinue isolation are met.

Rapid antigen tests include:

- Abbott BinaxNOW
- Sofia 2 SARS Antigen FIA (Quidel)
- BD Veritor Plus System antigen test.

Rapid/POC isothermal amplification tests include:

- Abbot ID NOW

ANTIBODY test:

- Antibody tests should NOT be used to diagnose or rule out an *active* COVID-19 infection.

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Students/Staff With KNOWN CLOSE CONTACT/EXPOSURE TO COVID-19:

COVID-19 testing is strongly recommended for students/staff who have had close contact* to an individual with COVID-19.

Students/Staff with known close contact to an individual with COVID-19 must quarantine for 14 days since the last date of exposure to that individual prior to returning to school, even with a negative COVID test.

- Close contacts who **develop symptoms** should be tested when they develop symptoms. (Repeat testing if previously tested negative).
- **Asymptomatic** close contacts should be tested 5-7 days after last exposure to the COVID-positive individual.
- If student/staff develops symptoms during quarantine and is NOT tested nor receives an alternative diagnosis, the student/staff member must complete the entire quarantine period **AND** be at least 10 days since symptom onset with symptoms improved and no fever for >24 hours.

Note: Testing or Quarantine is currently NOT recommended for asymptomatic close contacts who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months.

Interpreting Test Results for Students/Staff Who Are CLOSE CONTACTS:

PCR OR RAPID ANTIGEN** OR ABBOT ID NOW** test:

- **Positive** test: student/staff member is considered a positive case and must stay home until criteria to discontinue isolation are met.
- **Negative** test: student/staff member still must complete the entire quarantine period before returning to school. (*If symptomatic, refer to page 1 for testing requirements*).
 - If student/staff member has on-going exposure to the COVID-positive individual, the 14-day timeframe doesn't start until the COVID-positive individual is released from isolation.

ANTIBODY test:

- Antibody tests should generally NOT be used to determine if an individual must quarantine.
- Contact MCPH Communicable Disease Program with specific questions.

CONTACTING MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Testing Guidance, Clinical Questions, Reporting Results

MCPH Communicable Disease Program
980-314-9400 Option 2

Specific Child Care/Pre-K/K-12 Related Questions

MCPH Communicable Disease Program

- Shawn Wilson: 980-314-9208
- Shawn.Wilson@mecklenburgcountync.gov;
- Pamela Coffman: 980-314-9662
- Pamela.Coffman@mecklenburgcountync.gov
- Brian Lackey: 980-314-9206
- Brian.Lackey@mecklenburgcountync.gov

General COVID-19 Questions

MCPH COVID-19 Hotline
980-314-9400 Option 3

* A close contact is defined as someone who has been within 6 feet of a person currently infected the virus for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period beginning 2 days before the person became sick (or two days before the date of the COVID test date if the person doesn't have symptoms).

The current FDA authorized antigen tests and Abbot ID NOW test are intended for use in **symptomatic individuals within the first 5 to 7 days of symptom onset. <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/healthcare/Antigen-Provider-Update.pdf>